

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

EPA Bed Bug Update (as of 10-7-11)

The United States is one of many countries now experiencing a resurgence in bed bug populations. Though the exact cause is not known, experts suspect the resurgence is associated with increased resistance of bed bugs to available pesticides, greater international and domestic travel, lack of knowledge regarding control of bed bugs due to their prolonged absence, and the continuing decline or elimination of effective vector/pest control programs at state and local public health agencies. Since hosting the first National Bed Bug Summit in April of 2009, EPA has been actively working to help confront bed bugs. This summit, which was held under the auspices of the PPDC, concluded with recommendations to the agency for additional actions. Many of EPA's bed bug accomplishments for 2009 and 2010 were directly related to recommendations from this summit. EPA has responded to almost all of the recommendations from the first summit.

One of EPA's first actions was to organize the formation of the Federal Bed Bug Workgroup. This workgroup originated from federal agencies that have an interest in the impacts of bed bug infestations on public health, environmental protection, economics, military force protection, and healthy housing. The workgroup currently includes representatives from CDC, DOC, DoD, EPA, HUD, NIH, and USDA¹. The workgroup is a cooperative effort in recognition that no single federal agency has the lead on controlling bed bugs. Each agency approaches bed bugs from a different perspective (housing, control, research, etc.) and, through collaboration, the workgroup encourages efficiency and promotes effectiveness in many different federal programs.

In February of 2011, the Federal Bed Bug Workgroup hosted the Second National Bed Bug Summit. In the eighteen months between summits, the landscape surrounding bed bug control had changed significantly. The goals for the second summit were to: 1) identify knowledge gaps and barriers to effective, community-wide bed bug control; 2) propose next steps in addressing knowledge gaps and eliminating barriers; and 3) develop the framework for a federal bed bug strategy.

Since the Summit, the Federal Bed Bug Workgroup has been working on a detailed draft outline of a federal strategy. The goal of this strategy is to clearly identify the federal role, develop a roadmap for action on the federal level, reduce new infestations through prevention and control, and educate the public so that they are able to respond appropriately to the problem. The strategy is expected to focus on seven key areas of bed bug control:

- Prevention,
- Early Detection,
- Community Capacity,
- Surveillance and Effective Management,
- Education and Training,
- Communication, and
- Research.

During the development of the strategy, there will be several opportunities for public input into the structure and content of this initiative.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Department of Commerce (DOC), the Department of Defense (DoD), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

In addition to creating this strategy, both EPA and our federal partners have devoted considerable resources (both in financial and human capital) to support the fight against bed bugs. In responding to the bed bug situation, OPP strives to adhere to four major principles:

- Serve as a source of reliable, expert, science-based information for the public (which encourages appropriate control techniques and discourages misuse)
- Support the development of new tools, improve the performance of existing tools, and limit the potential for resistance
 - Improve labeling and regulatory processes for products registered for bed bug control
 - Encourage research to improve bed bug control techniques
- Promote IPM as a lower risk, more effective means of control (in fact, for bed bugs, IPM is the only effective bed bug control technique over the long term)
- Collaborate with our federal partners to encourage efficiency and promote effectiveness in federal programs
 - Keeping other stakeholders informed of our progress through summits, presentations to interested groups, and responses to the media

Ongoing and Current EPA Actions

- Continuing to work with the federal partners on completing the federal strategy, the first draft of which should be ready for public comment next Spring or Summer
- Launching an online Bed Bug Information Clearinghouse (in response to a recommendation from the Second National Bed Bug Summit), with an expected release date this fall
 - To provide a “one-stop” location for communities throughout the country to exchange information and outreach materials on the control, detection and prevention of bed bugs
 - Initially, clearinghouse will:
 - Contain peer-reviewed bed bug outreach materials
 - Include materials primarily from federal and state government or university sources
 - Partner with Federal Bed Bug Workgroup as a collaborative effort
 - Help communities conserve resources and provide improved effectiveness and accuracy of community outreach materials.
 - List information organized by topics (such as detection, nonchemical control, biology) , potential audiences (such as hotels, landlords, public health agencies), and types of materials (such as fact sheets, presentations, brochures)
- Updating efficacy guidelines for bed bug control product, Science Advisory Panel tentatively scheduled for early 2012
- Continuing efforts to encourage the registration of new pesticide tools to combat bed bugs
- Working to clarify regulatory requirements for 25(b) and non-traditional control methods

Highlights of Past EPA Accomplishments:

- Created a bed bug web page to provide quality, expert information on bed bugs and their control
- Information on site is updated regularly to keep current
 - Several updates have occurred since launch in Spring of 2010, including addition of Top Ten Bed Bug Tips
- Averaging almost 8500 hits per day for 2011, site is one of the most popular EPA web pages
- Information on site is reviewed by federal partners to provide additional input
- Consumer Alert added warning public against misuse of pesticides in September 2010
- Product search tool was released October of 2010

- Provides listing of over 300 products available to the public for control of bed bugs
- Funded several activities through the PESP and STAG grant programs
 - In 2008 almost \$50K in PESP funds were used for Purdue University to evaluate bed bug control methods in multi-family dwellings
 - Funded NCHH's publication "What's Working for Bed Bug Control in Multi-Family Housing" in Spring 2010
- In 2010, approximately \$75K of STAG funds were provided to Virginia for bed bug education/outreach
- In 2011, OPP is funding \$550K in STAG funds (to MD, MI, MO, NJ, TX) for bed bug education and outreach programs
 - Once complete these projects will be made available for adoption by other communities through the Clearinghouse (see below)
- Encouraged development of new pesticides
 - Have registered several new products, but no one product can be expected to solve the problem
 - OPP continues to expedite registration actions for any new products or new uses on existing products for bed bugs
 - Actively working with USDA-ARS to identify potential new tools for bed bug control
 - Improved efficacy guidelines and evaluations for bed bugs by adding testing of bed bugs from pyrethroid-resistant strains and field populations
- Issued joint statement with CDC August 2010
 - Reiterates agencies' position on bed bugs as a "pest of significant public health importance" (as stated in PR Notice 2002-1, which was developed by CDC, EPA, and USDA)
- Published bibliography of published research (federal bed bug workgroup product, AFPMB lead)